

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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SS-15 STR-05 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02

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FM USINT HAVANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 221

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 0249

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EEWT EPAP UR CU

SUBJ: CUBAN-SOVIET TRADE

1. USINT OFFICER (GLASSMAN), SEPTEMBER 29, CALLED ON VLADIMIR M. BOROVELEV, DEPUTY SOVIET TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, AND SADID G. KASIMOV, CHIEF OF ECONOMIC SECTION OF SOVIET TRADE REPRESENTATION IN CUBA.

2. SOVIETS STATED THAT, DESPITE ONGOING TALKS WITH OTHER COMECON MEMBERS ON POST-1980 TRADE, ONLY PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN HELD WITH CUBANS ON THIS SUBJECT. CUBANS, SOVIETS SAID, ARE HAVING TROUBLE WORKING OUT THEIR 1981-85 FIVE YEAR PLAN BECAUSE OF CUBAN HARD CURRENCY UNCERTAINTIES. (COMMENT: IMPLICATION WAS THAT CUBANS ARE NOT SURE OF DEGREE TO WHICH THEY WILL HAVE TO RELY ON SOVIETS, RATHER THAN CAPITALIST MARKET, FOR CERTAIN GOODS AND MATERIALS IN POST-1980 PERIOD.) CUBAN PLANNING JUNTA (JUCEPLAN) DIRECTOR PEREZ IS NOW IN MOSCOW FOR EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT. (FYI SOVIETS STATED THAT CUBAN VICE-MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE GERMAN AMADO BLANCO ALSO IS NOW IN MOSCOW NEGOTIATING 1978 CUBAN-SOVIET TRADE PROTOCOL. GRANMA, SEPTEMBER 30, INDICATES THAT PEREZ AND AMADO BLANCO MET, SEPTEMBER 29, WITH
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IVAN ARKHIPOV, VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE SOVIET COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.)

3. SOVIETS STATED THAT USSR IS TAKING INTO ACCOUNT SUGAR IMPORTS FROM CUBA ON THREE MILLION TONS PER YEAR IN PLANNING SOVIET SUGAR BEET PRODUCTION FOR POST-1980 PERIOD. GIVEN PLANNED INCREASE IN SOVIET BEET PRODUCTION, THIS WILL LEAD TO RISE IN PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF SUGAR IN USSR. SOVIETS SAID THAT CUBANS HAVE

MADE VERY CLEAR ALREADY THAT THEY WANT TO EXPORT MORE THAN THREE MILLION TONS OF SUGAR ANNUALLY TO USSR AFTER 1980. SOVIETS STATED, NEVERTHELESS: THAT, FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, THREE MILLION TONS SHOULD BE BASE FIGURE.

4. WITH REGARD TO PRE-1980 TRADE, SOVIETS CONFIRMED THAT 1975 AND 1976 HARD CURRENCY SUGAR PURCHASES BY USSR WILL NOT BE REPEATED.

5. AFTER RAISING NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ABOUT US EMBARGO, PARTICULARLY ABORTED MCGOVERN AMENDMENT, SOVIETS VOLUNTEERED THAT USSR WAS INTERESTED IN SHIFTING ITS CURRENT HARD CURRENCY GRAIN PURCHASES FOR CUBA FROM CANADA TO US SINCE THIS WOULD REDUCE SHIPPING BURDEN AND EXPENSES. SOVIETS ADDED THAT MOSCOW WANTS TO TERMINATE RICE SHIPMENTS TO CUBA (CURRENTLY SOME 90 MILLION TONS ANNUALLY, THEY SAID) SINCE SOVIET RICE PRODUCTION IS ABSORBING TOO MUCH MANPOWER AND GOOD LAND. THEY SAID, IN THIS CONNECTION, THAT SOVIET HARD CURRENCY PURCHASES OF US RICE FOR CUBANS IS POSSIBLY THAT HAS BEEN CONTEMPLATED BY MOSCOW.

6. EMBASSY MOSCOW COMMENTS ON CREDIBILITY OF PARA 5 STATEMENTS ON RICE WOULD BE WELCOMED.

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